

The Bible



We believe that the Bible is the most important of all the ways God's person and presence are revealed to humanity. That is because it is in reading the biblical books that we most reliably hear and encounter the living Word of God, who is the risen Jesus.

The Bible's very name begins to tell us what we have between its covers. In Greek "the Bible" literally means "the books." The Bible that Lutherans use is a collection of 66 books produced over a period of as much as 1,000 years. Each of these books had a life and use of its own prior to its incorporation into what we know as the Bible.

The Bible contains the story of God's interaction with humankind, first through the understanding of the Jewish people (Old Testament, 39 books), and subsequently to all people through God's self revelation in Jesus (New Testament, 27 books).

We believe that people meet God in Scripture, where God's heart, mind, relationship to - and intention for - humankind are revealed. Through an ongoing dialogue with the God revealed in the Bible, people in every age are called to a living faith.

Most Americans, religious or not, have heard of and read part or even all of the Bible. It is arguably one of the most often referenced books — or set of books — in our culture. In its most basic definition, the Bible is a diverse collection of writings, divided into two main sections:

☐ the Old Testament, which tells the story of God's relationship with and work on behalf of the Hebrew people

☐ the New Testament, which shares the story of Jesus, God's Son, and his teachings, death and resurrection, as well as the experiences and faith of the first followers of Jesus

But its meaning — and its significance to the Christian faith — is far more complex and profound. We believe that the Bible is the written Word of God. It creates and nurtures faith through the work of the Holy Spirit and points us to Jesus Christ, the living Word and center of our faith. And in reading the Bible, we are invited into a relationship with God that both challenges us and promises us new life.